Will the Queen Mother Come to Rideau Hall?

By GORDON LANGLEY HALL

She'd be Welcome

LONDON

WILL Britain's popular Queen Mother be Canada's next governor-general? Britons and Canadians are both asking the same question following editorials in leading newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Queen Mother is known to have a warm spot in her heart for the Dominion. She has never forgotten the welcome Canadians afforded the late King and herself when they visited the country in 1939. Then, also, parts of the vast country remind her of Scotland where she was born.

If the appointment was made Princess Margaret might well accompany her mother to Ottawa for the two have always lived together. Nothing would please Margaret more. She has always wanted to pay a real visit to North America.

Both women are noted for having the common touch. They are good mixers and their presence in Canada would doubtless send up the tourist trade, especially from the American side of the border.

Familiarly known to her Cockney neighbors as the "Queen Mum," the mother of Queen Elizabeth II in a message to the British nation at the time of her husband, King George VI's death, said, "My only wish now is that I may be allowed to continue the work we sought to do together," and she is carrying out to the letter the task she has set herself, especially among the poor.

The Londoners have never forgotten that she refused to leave them when night after night the city was a bomb target during the World War. They saw her cry openly as she passed through the shattered streets.

A compassionate woman, and one who believes that the Bible should be placed where it can be seen and read in every home, she has learned to give practical help where it is most needed. One of her long-time maids became an alcoholic, and the Queen Mother supported her while she took special treatment in a sanatorium, and looked after her for some years until she died.

The Queen Mother also is a firm believer in prayer. When the governor of St. Mary's Hospital in London remarked it was a miracle that the hospital was not hit by bombs during the war, she quipped, "A miracle? That may be so. But you know, I included St. Mary's in my prayers every night!"

ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER

A religious woman, and non-sectarian in many of her beliefs, she never misses a Sunday morning service or early communion. She recently heard the American evangelist Billy Graham preach a command-sermon before her daughter, Queen Elizabeth II.

LIKE MANY BRITONS, the Queen Mother has a fascination for studying murder cases, and on a free afternoon she will slip quietly away from Clarence House where she lives, and listen to the details of many a gory crime related to her by the country's most famous criminologists and poison analysts. She also is interested in the evidence in the criminal laboratory collections and perches on a high stood to study them.

When I recently saw the Queen Mother at an official function, she looked as young as ever. In her late fifties, her hair is still unstreaked with grey, although it has somewhat darkened in a way that is characteristic of Scottish folk. Her complexion is flawless; she uses little make-up, only a light lipstick. Her energy still seems boundless. At the home of one of my friend's in New York during her last visit, she wore them all out in a single evening, singing songs with Yale students, and later bemoaning the fact "that she had to go home to bed."

Next morning she was up with the lark to fulfill a host of public engagements.

She is still the least photogenic of the most photographed people I have ever come across, and as a cameraman once said, "That little woman has grounds for a libel suit every time she is photographed."

SHE IS QUITE AWARE of her middle-age and is one of the few celebrities to send back a portrait with instructions that she be made to look a little older!

"I have battled my way through a number of years, and cannot have come through completely unscathed," she said.

She loves her grandchildren, the Prince of Wales and Princess Anne, and like many another grandmother, spoils them. Her daughter, Queen Elizabeth II, consults her mother daily on many domestic problems, and, she is on particularly good terms with her son-in-law, Philip, Duke of Edinhurgh.

Princess Margaret has her own suite of rooms in her mother's home, but made a stipulation to have her own front door. She would probably want the same thing in Ottawa!

The Queen Mother never has received the Duchess of Windsor, although she is the woman indirectly responsible for making her a queen. She does, however, occasionally have the Duke of Windsor in for a friendly cup of tea when he is visiting London on his own.

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(The writer, author of the book "Princess Margaret" (Ryerson Press), has just completed a three months' tour in England and Scotland gathering material for a book on the Queen Mother).

George Drew Looks at Canadian Economy

By RICHARD L. THOMAS

No Cause for Gloom

CANADA has established at least one fact in London—a High Commissioner with an unabashed spirit of optimism. Nothing will shake George Drew, former premier of Ontario, and there is really no reason why it should. "I make no apology for being the complete optimist as far as Canada is concerned," he told a group of Canadian newspapermen on his return from Guelph, where he spent Christmas and the early part of the New Year.

"What about unemployment?" he was asked.

"There is unemployment," he replied, "but I think that is the wrong way of looking at it. It is an unfortunate phase in the readjustment of Canada. It is very difficult for those affected—but the real test is to consider the number of people employed in Canada. You know I was staggered by the number of Canadians I spoke to who still think of Canada in terms of a 15,000,000 population—Canadians in Canada mark you—it just had not penetrated that Canada is well over the top of 17,000,000 and growing faster in ratio to population than almost any country in the world."

"How long will this spate of unemployment last?" Mr. Drew was asked.

"It is transitional. It is the result of readjustments. I am sure it is very temporary." We were left with a firm conviction that exceptional numbers of immigrants, a heavy birth rate and lowering death rates had conspired to give Canada temporary indigestion. A sort of national tummy-ache, very unpleasant whilst it was on but nothing really to worry about."

"What about the Canadian dollar?"

"Well—there you are. That shows the health of the Canadian economy. Many of our exporters would like to see it nearer parity with the United States' dollar. In fact the Canadian dollar shows the strength of our economy, the popularity of Canadian investment and the general strength of the country."

Mr. Drew hardly paused for breath.

"I was amazed by the determination and virility of Canada," he went on. "These transitionary troubles won't last. Just think of all the construction work which the St. Lawrence Seaway will make necessary—new docks, roads, railways, warehouses and so on. And it will bring more industrial activity as the result of new markets and cheaper freight. Some of our troubles are due to the decline in the coal mining industry—but that's not just a Canadian problem; it is world-wide. Eventually I am sure coal will return as a more valuable product—the raw material of an expanding synthetics industry."

Migration? The High Commissioner refused to be drawn on matters of policy, but he was quite sure that there were unlimited opportunities in Canada. It was nonsense to think that there was anything fundamentally wrong with the Canadian economy. Mr. Drew was sure that 1959 was going to be a great year for Canada.

There was nothing half-hearted or apologetic about the former Ontario premier. He recognized that it was tough for those out of jobs—but the tide was turning, and he repeated "The real test is the ever increasing amount of total employment over the years—that shows the real strength of the nation."

So at least you know that there is no gloom in Canada House. There is no depression there. And George Drew says he should know. He remembers when Guelph was a city of 10,000 people. Today it is 45,000 "and there are hundreds of communities like that in Canada."

And he hopes that a great boost for Canada will come from complete convertibility of sterling. "It would be the best thing which could happen," he commented, and added that the flow of sterling capital to Canada was increasing.

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January is the time when most English banks have their annual meetings and the chairmen make reviews and predictions. This year British banks have emerged from their cocoon of traditional conservatism and the results are beginning to show in their balance sheets. Lord Monkton returned from a Canadian trip obviously impressed by Canadian banking virility. He introduced personal loans and personal cheque accounts at 6d a cheque (including twopence duty to the government) and illuminated signs outside the bank's premises.

Some banks have started financing automobile purchases—causing heartache amongst the time payment finance houses.